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## **A “virtual” Coffee Concert recorded at the Holywell Music Room, Oxford**

**Sunday January 24, 2021 at 11:15**

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Virtual Coffee Concerts are pre-recorded at the Holywell Music Room in Oxford and can be streamed from our YouTube channel at 11:15 on Sunday mornings. (These recordings are available for a limited time after release but, of course, there will be more to come.)

### **The Leonore Piano Trio**

- **Haydn: Piano Trio no 35 in C major, Hob XV:21**
- **Dvořák: Piano Trio no 3 in F minor, op 65, B 130**

Benjamin Nabarro (violin)  
Gemma Rosefield (cello)  
Tim Horton (piano)

Formed in 2012, the Leonore Piano Trio bring together three internationally acclaimed artists whose piano trio performances as part of Ensemble 360 were met with such an enthusiastic response that they decided to form a piano trio in their own right. The Trio have since given concerts both at home and in many other parts of the world, combining a comprehensive repertoire of works by the celebrated classical and romantic composers; an unrivalled exploration of lesser-known and forgotten pieces from the 19th century; exciting and innovative performances for young audiences and a range of contemporary and new works.

The Leonore Piano Trio record for the Hyperion label and have released seven CDs for that label in as many years, including unjustly

neglected or forgotten works, receiving praise and critical acclaim such as this from The Gramophone Magazine both nationally and internationally: “You’ll be purring with satisfaction at this exemplary new release from the Leonore Piano Trio. Enthusiasm isn’t always enough to prevent recordings of unfamiliar music from sounding raw but these performances feel fully matured — fresh, intelligent and strikingly stylish; edgy when they need to be and opening out generously when Parry’s romantic impulse demands it.”

In 2015 the trio performed Beethoven’s complete Piano Trios at Kings Place, London, and initiated an even broader project including all his duo sonatas for piano with violin and cello. In 2019 they finished a complete cycle of trios and duos for Music in the Round, Sheffield.

The members of the Leonore Trio are keen exponents of contemporary music and have

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performed works by distinguished composers including Harrison Birtwistle and Huw Watkins. They gave the first performance of Holkham Beach, a piece written for and dedicated to them by Simon Rowland-Jones. Their recording of the complete piano trios by David Matthews, for Toccata Classics, was hailed by the composer as “definitive”. As part of their

commitment to education and outreach, the trio commissioned a narrated work for young audiences from Rachel Leach, based on the book by Steven Isserlis “Why Beethoven Threw the Stew”. It has proved to be an entertaining introduction to the music of Beethoven and the power of chamber music for all ages.

More information:

<https://www.leonorepianotrio.com/>

## **Piano Trio no 35 in C major, Hob XV:21** **Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)**

### **1. Adagio pastorale – vivace assai; 2. Molto andante; 3. Finale. Presto.**

Haydn’s piano trios used to be among his most neglected groups of works, although they are now receiving more of the attention they deserve. They grew out of the repertoire of mid-18th century chamber music in which the keyboard part tended to predominate, with violin parts treated as accompaniments, or even dispensable altogether. Surviving baroque habits of thought still tended to regard the cello as a continuo instrument – in other words, it was expected to do little more than reinforce the bass of the keyboard part. As late as the 1780s and 90s publishers were still marketing Haydn’s trios as ‘Sonatas for harpsichord or Forte-piano with a violin and violoncello’. Even in these later works the keyboard still tends to be the dominant partner, though the violin, at least, has more of an independent part.

Most of Haydn’s last group of trios were written during his second visit to London, from 1794-5. No 21 is the first of a set of three published by the London firm of Preston and

Son, and dedicated to Princess Marie Hermenegild Esterházy, wife of Prince Nicolaus Esterházy 2nd. It was for her name-day celebrations that Haydn was to write his series of late masses, between 1796 and 1802.

The Trio in C – No. 21 in Anthony van Hoboken’s catalogue, No 35 in the more recent and more comprehensive listing by Haydn scholar HC Robbins Landon – is unusual among Haydn’s trios in starting with a slow introduction, a few bars’ gentle musing whose theme is also the basis of the lively main part of the movement. The second movement begins and ends in a genial frame of mind, but there are some powerful changes of key ruffling the surface along the way. The Trio ends with one of Haydn’s typically ebullient finales. Here, too, there are moments of tension, such as the unexpected brief silences that launch the central section, but the music retains its bubbling good humour through to the end.

**Piano Trio no 3 in F minor, op 65, B 130**  
**Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

**1. Allegro ma non troppo; 2. Allegro grazioso;  
3, Poco adagio; 4. Finale. Allegro con brio.**

The F minor Piano Trio was written at a critical time in Dvořák's career. By the beginning of the 1880s he had achieved a considerable amount of international success, particularly in Vienna and Berlin. But growing fame also presented him with a dilemma: whether to stay true to his roots by remaining in Prague or to move closer to the Austro-German mainstream by settling in Vienna, as he was being urged to do by admirers such as Brahms, the violinist Joseph Joachim and the influential critic Eduard Hanslick. In the end, the temptation to pursue international fame by that particular route was outweighed by loyalty to his native Bohemia.

While it is not always wise to read a composer's circumstances into their work too closely, the F minor Trio is undeniably stormy. Dvořák finished writing out the only surviving manuscript score at the end of March 1883, though he extensively revised the work after that date, including reversing the original order of the two middle movements. It was published and first performed in the autumn of that year.

The first movement's turbulence is immediately established by the darkly passionate theme, that opens the first movement, initially on the violin and cello. When the music eventually relaxes, the second main theme emerges on the cello, broad and lyrical but still with a degree of restlessness. Lyrical moments continue to provide poignant contrast, but the overall mood remains urgent and tempestuous.

Instead of a quick scherzo, the second movement is gently paced. It begins by the strings setting up an accompanying pattern whose rhythm contradicts that of the piano's main theme. Rhythmic tension takes a different form in the slower central section, with a syncopated accompanying figure in the piano's right hand, which the Dvořák scholar John Clapham suggested has its origin in a type of traditional Slovak dance.

Another broad, lyrical theme for the cello opens the third movement. Contrast comes with a brief flare-up of energy and a strenuous new idea shared between the violin and cello; flickering accompaniment patterns on the piano suggest the sound of a cimbalom, a dulcimer-like instrument common in Eastern Europe. These reappear as the music begins winding down to its gentle ending.

A mood of brisk determination, though still darkly coloured, characterises the start of the finale. Dance rhythms underpin the movement, in the quieter passages as much as the more energetic ones. Eventually they propel the music towards a climax marked by two swift build-ups, each followed by an abrupt cut-off and a moment's silence. The music eventually picks up speed again, with the violin and cello reminding us of the opening theme of the first movement. As so often with Dvořák, there is a quiet, introspective moment before the vigorous final bars.

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